

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 NIC-01 CU-04 AID-20 IGA-02

PC-04 INT-08 RSR-01 /140 W
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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4400

INFO USCINCSO

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: CI, PINT, ELAB

SUBJ: BUS STRIKE SETTLED, STUDENTS MARCH

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

REF: SANTIAGO 2235

1. SUMMARY. STRIKING PRIVATE BUS OWNERS AND DRIVERS REACHED AT LEAST INITIAL AGREEMENT WITH GOVT EARLY MAY 24 AND SERVICE GRADUALLY BEING RESTORED. SECONDARY AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS MARCHED IN SANTIAGO IN SUPPORT OF STRIKING TENIENTE MINERS, WHILE OPPOSITION PRESS HEAVILY PUBLICIZED SHOOTING INCIDENT IN RANCAGUA MAY 23. GAS STATION ATTENDANTS THREATEN ANOTHER STRIKE, AS AGITATED LABOR SCENE CONTRIBUTES TO GENERAL MALAISE. END SUMMARY.

2. TWO- DAY STRIKE OF PRIVATELY OWNED MUNICIPAL BUS LINES (REFTTEL) APPARENTLY SETTLED EARLY MORNING MAY 24, AND BUS SERVICE SHOWED SIGNS OF GRADUAL RESTORATION DURING COURSE OF TODAY. AFTER INTENSE NEGOTIATIONS AND EXCHANGES OF HARD- LINE STATEMENTS DESIGNED FOR MAXIMUM BARGAINING IMPACT, GOVT GRANTED BUS OWNERS DEMAND FOR FOUR ESCUDO DAY PASSENGER FARE EFFECTIVE JUNE 1, BUT SHAVED
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OTHER FINANCIAL BENEFITS DEMANDED BY OWNERS. BOTH SIDES PLEDGED THEMSELVES TO IMPROVE SERVICE. TAXI OWNERS GOT 100 PERCENT RATE INCREASE, RAISING INITIAL FARE FROM 11.5 ESCUDOS TO 25 AND INCREASING RATES FOR DISTANCE ACTUALLY TRAVELED. BUS DRIVERS UNION, WHICH BEGAN ITS OWN STRIKE MIDNIGHT MAY 23, WON 100 PERCENT WAGE INCREASE AND SOME FRINGE BENEFIT IMPROVEMENTS, BUT SOME PROBLEMS REPORTED IN RANK- AND- FILE RATIFICATION OF AGREEMENT.

3. NO BREAKTHROUGHS ON EL TENIENTE COPPER MINERS STRIKE. OPPOSITION PRESS TRUMPETED YESTERDAY'S RANCAGUA SHOOTING (REFTEL); FINAL TALLY SHOWED SIX OR SEVEN PRO- STRIKE DEMONSTRATORS HURT, ONE SERIOUSLY. UP PRESS DOWNPLAYED STORY AND AVERRED INCIDENT WAS INSPIRED BY " FASCIST PROVOCATEURS" WHOSE GOAL WAS TO SACK LOCAL SOCIALIST PARTY HEADQUARTERS. OPPOSITION- CONTROLLED SANTIAGO SECONDARY STUDENTS FEDERATION (FESES) AND MANY UNIV OF CHILE STUDENTS BEGAN SOLIDARITY DEMONSTRATION WITH COPPER STRIKERS WITH RALLY MORNING MAY 24 FOLLOWED BY MARCH THROUGH DOWNTOWN SANTIAGO.

ALTHOUGH SANTIAGO INTENDENTE POINTEDLY REFUSED TO GRANT PERMISSION FOR MARCH AND POLICE WERE OUT IN FORCE, NO NOTABLE CLASHES REPORTED BY MIDAFTERNOON. UNIV OF CHILE PROFESSORS AND CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY STUDENT FEDERATION(FEUC) ANNOUNCED PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS FOR TOMORROW, PARTIALLY IN SOLIDARITY WITH TENIENTE STRIKERS AND PARTIALLY TO SUPPORT DEMANDS OF THEIR OWN. PDC AND PN, MEANWHILE, AGREED TO FILE IMPEACHMENT CHARGES AGAINST MINLABOR FIGUEROA AND MINMINES BITAR AS REQUESTED BY TENIENTE STRIKERS.

4. PRIOR TO BUS SETTLEMENT, BOTH COMMUNIST PARTY AND UP ISSUED STATEMENTS DENOUNCING ALLEGED OPPOSITION LINKS TO BUS AND TENIENTE STRIKES AND CLAIMING OPPOSITION HOPED TO CREATE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CHAOS AS PRELIMINARY CONDITION TO CIVIL WAR. STATEMENTS CALLED ON WORKERS TO UNITE BEHIND GOVT " LIKE LAST OCTOBER."

5. IN OTHER STRIKE ACTIVITY, WORKERS AT LA MONEDA (WHO PRINT PAPER MONEY AMONG OTHER DUTIES) UNDERLINED SERIOUSNESS OF THEIR WEEK- LONG STRIKE WITH PEACEFUL STREET DEMONSTRATION THIS AFTERNOON.

GAS STATION ATTENDENTS, NOTING 15- DAY PERIOD FOR GOVT TO RESOLVE THEIR COMPLAINTS (SANTIAGO 1942) EXPIRED MAY 19, WITHOUT DEFINITIVE SOLUTION, ARE THREATENING TO STRIKE AGAIN, THEREBY ADDING TO GROWING PROBLEM OF SHORTAGE OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS INCLUDING GASOLINE.

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6. COMMENT. STRIKE SCENE REMAINS AGITATED IN SPITE OF BUS SETTLEMENT AND PROVIDES FERTILE GROUND FOR MACHINATIONS OF POLITICIANS ON ALL SIDES.

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